

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 111820Z OCT 74 ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5882

S E C R E T ATHENS 7461

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE AVEROFF VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: STATE 222312

1. I SAW DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF LAST NIGHT AT AN INFORMAL PRIVATE DINNER AT THE RESIDENCE OF DCM STEARNS. DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENING I HAD OPPORTUNITY TO REVERT TO OUR DISCUSSION A FEW DAYS AGO ABOUT AVEROFF'S POSSIBLE VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

2. I SAID THAT I HAD CHECKED WITH WASHINGTON AS TO ANY PLANS BEING MADE OR THOUGHTS THERE ABOUT A POSSIBLE VISIT BY THE DEFENSE MINISTER. IN REPLY I HAD LEARNED THAT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER--WHO WOULD BE AVEROFF'S OBVIOUS HOST--HAD NOT EXTENDED AN INVITATION BUT WAS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING AVEROFF AT THE NPG MEETING IN ROME NOVEMBER 7-8 IF AVEROFF WERE GOING. AVEROFF SAID THAT HE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER BUT THAT IN VIEW OF THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 17 IT WOULD BE HIGHLY INADVISABLE FOR HIM TO GO TO THE NPG MEETING. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, AVEROFF SAID THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE WHETHER SOMEONE ELSE FROM GREECE MIGHT ATTEND THAT MEETING.

3. I TRIED TO HANDLE THIS DELICATE MATTER IN AS INFORMAL AND OFF-HAND WAY AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO AVOID GIVING ANY POSSIBLE OFFENSE TO AVEROFF. HE INDICATED HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE MATTER

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OF HIS BEING INVITED TO GO TO WASHINGTON HAD FIRST ARISEN, BUT

HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE GROWN OUT OF THE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIPS EXISTING BETWEEN OUR TWO NAVIES AND THE STRONG DESIRE BY HELLENIC NAVY OFFICERS TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL VESSELS FROM THE U.S.

4. IN ANY CASE, THE POSSIBILITY OF AVEROFF VISITING WASHINGTON AT THE OFFICIAL INVITATION FROM SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAS BEEN KNOCKED IN THE HEAD FOR THE PRESENT. I BELIEVE WE GOT THE MESSAGE ACROSS TO AVEROFF ABOUT AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED, AND HE SHOWED NO DISAPPOINTMENT OR RESENTMENT OF ANY KIND. HOWEVER, I AM UNABLE TO SAY WHETHER OR NOT THE "MIS-UNDERSTANDING" WAS SOLEY AVEROFF'S FAULT AND, IF NOT, WE MAY HAVE PAID SOME PRICE IN HIS GOOD WILL AT A SENSITIVE MOMENT IN U.S.-GREEK RELATIONS WHEN HE IS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT MEN DIRECTING THIS COUNTRY'S AFFAIRS.
KUBISCH

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INVITATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATHENS07461
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740290-0341
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741054/aaaabttr.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: STATE 222312
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE AVEROFF VISIT TO WASHINGTON
TAGS: PFOR, GR, US, (AVEROFF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005